

Housing Opportunity Grant Program COVID-19 Supplemental – Phase 2

State Fiscal Year 2021¹ (July 1-December 30, 2020) Program Summary

The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) awarded over \$3.5 million in supplemental funding in State Fiscal Year 2021 under the Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP) to support COVID-19 related costs at 29 non-profit community organizations in Vermont. These funds met the immediate need for expanded essential services and housing navigation services to exit and re-house families and individuals experiencing homelessness and in motels due to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Approximately \$3.2 million was expended due to delays in hiring as well as challenges in finding staff for short term positions. A summary of outcomes and investments follows:

- 27 agencies expanded outreach and onsite services to households in motels, 1,141 households were served. Of those, 17% (191 households) moved from homelessness to safe housing.
- 18 agencies provided housing navigation services² serving 1,810 households. 249 of those household were rehoused in stable permanent housing.
- Over \$220,000 was invested to create mental health support service capacity on-site at motels to support homeless individuals and families. 7 agencies participated in this effort, serving 9 of the 12 AHS Districts. 171 households were referred and of those households connected with a mental health support person, 92 connected with ongoing mental health or substance use services.
- 3 agencies established new landlord liaison projects in 4 AHS Districts to support re-housing efforts.
- Emergency shelter providers utilized these funds to add staff capacity and procure supplies such as HEPA air purifiers and personal protective equipment as part of COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

These efforts were implemented in conjunction with programs such as the ESG CARES Housing Project, which provided over 375 new housing rental assistance vouchers, and the Rapid Resolution Housing Initiative, which provided flexible financial assistance to assist households in exiting motels.

Reflections from COVID-19 Supplemental Fund Recipients:

¹ One of the twenty-eight agencies included in this summary received funding for a performance period of April 15, 2020-December 30, 2020.

²Twelve of the eighteen agencies received a combination of HOP and HOP COVID-19 Supplemental funding for housing navigation.

"We have been able to add more support for case managers ... also added a motel case manager, who has been able to be a direct connection for those that are in the hotels ... We have worked tirelessly to support the growing numbers of individuals that have been housed at the motels in and around our area ... The CARES vouchers have been a nice addition ... The Rental Rehab program has provided a few more units ... Another amazing success has been the Rapid Resolution Housing Initiative Funding ... ensur[ing] that an individual would be able to have safe housing without much delay." Springfield Supported Housing Program

"CSAC has focused on using this grant as an opportunity to strengthen our relationship and coordination with Charter House Coalition and the folks they serve ... Our outreach worker has also been able to provide in-person follow up with homeless clients who had recent contacts with CSAC Emergency Team and therefore provide instrumental follow up for Addison County residents in crisis." Counseling Services of Addison County

"The work that the Landlord Liaison has done has allowed us a better picture of housing resources and needs in our region. We think that moving forward we will be better able to efficiently match people looking for housing with available housing." Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity in Franklin-Grand Isle